

Republican House Members Will Vote to Override Veto -- June 20, 2007

Washington,
D.C. -- Republican
House Members, including Congressman Mike Castle (DE-AL), Congresswoman Mary Bono (CA-45), Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite (FL-05), Congressman Mark Kirk (IL-10), and Congressman Christopher Shays (CT-04), who helped the House pass the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act in the 109th and now the 110th Congress, today promised to vote to override the Presidential veto of the legislation -- his second veto of federal funding for this research.

The legislation vetoed today provides an ethical construct to oversee stem cells donated for research by ensuring federal funding for research is only used on donated embryos that were created solely for the purpose of fertility treatment and exceed clinical need -- embryos that would otherwise be discarded. One out of every three Americans suffers from an illness whose cure may be found through embryonic stem cell research -- such as Diabetes, HIV/AIDS or and Cancer.

"I am saddened that the President has vetoed the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act because his policy continues to keep the clock stopped on research which so many leading scientists around the world believe has the potential to alleviate pain and suffering. We will not give up until this policy is changed. Americans agree - by a two to one margin - that the United States cannot afford to ignore the potential of embryonic stem cell research. This is not a partisan issue - supporters are on the side of progress, science and hope," said Congressman Mike Castle (DE-AL).

"I was very disappointed to see that President Bush today vetoed S. 5, which passed the House and Senate by a significant majority. Like a vast majority of Americans, I am concerned that the untapped potential of stem cell research may be falling by the wayside. It is because of my strong respect for and commitment to life that I supported this bill earlier this month. I would sincerely hope that enough Members of the House and the Senate would unite in support of this bill to override the President's veto and not cut this funding off at the pass," said Congresswoman Ginny Brown-Waite (FL-05).

"Stem cell research presents the greatest opportunity of one day finding cures for diseases like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and Diabetes. We have an opportunity to bring hope to victims of these and other diseases. Congress has an obligation to not close any more doors for these families. Doctors and scientists should guide our medical cures - not politicians," said Congressman Mark Kirk (IL-10).

"Stem cell research holds enormous promise for easing human suffering and could dramatically improve the lives of many of my constituents suffering from diseases such as diabetes, Alzheimer's, and multiple sclerosis. I am proud that Congress has made a bipartisan statement to the administration and am hopeful we will see this scientific opportunity move forward," said Congressman Jon Porter (NV-03).

"This is not a matter of pro-life versus pro-choice, but rather, it is a matter of man and womankind versus disease. Embryonic stem cell research has the potential to yield significant scientific advances to heal and prevent many diseases throughout the world. I believe history will not look kindly on the president's actions," said Congressman Christopher Shays (CT-04).

Summary of S. 5,
"The Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act":

The Secretary of Health
& Human Services shall conduct and support research on stem cells that have been derived from embryos ONLY if the following requirements are met:

- Embryos used to derive stem cells were originally created for fertility treatment purposes and are in excess of clinical need;
- The individuals seeking fertility treatments for whom the embryos were created have determined that the embryos will not be implanted in a woman and will otherwise be discarded;
- The individuals for whom the embryos were created have provided written consent for embryo donation and without receiving financial inducement; and
- New language in the bill would require the HHS Secretary to develop alternative mechanisms to derive stem cells without destroying a human embryo.

The Secretary, in consultation with the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), shall issue guidelines 60 days after enactment. These guidelines shall ensure that federally funded researchers adhere to ethical considerations. The Secretary shall annually report to Congress about NIH funded stem cell research.

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